

THE  
Grand Question debated ;  
OR AN  
ESSAY  
TO PROVE

That the Soul of Man *is not*, neither  
*can it be*, IMMORTAL.

THE  
Whole founded on the ARGUMENTS of  
LOCKE, NEWTON, POPE,  
BURNET, WATTS, &c.

---

By ONTOLOGOS.

*Slave to no Set who takes no private Road,  
But looks thro' Nature up to Nature's God.*

POPE.

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THE

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OF THE

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AND

THE HISTORY OF THE

ART

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# INTRODUCTION

Necessary to be read.

**I**N this Age of Doubt and Enquiry, when any Dissention from the Sentiments of the rest of Mankind is esteem'd an Instance of superior and refin'd Qualifications, it is highly probable that many of our fashionable Philosophers will be strangely elated on the Appearance of an Essay of this Kind; and begin to triumph over those Set of Men who have Confidence enough in any particular System, as to think Reason can afford no better or surer way to Virtue and Happiness.---But however these People may value themselves for differing from the rest of the World, had the Author of this Essay no other View than to shew himself in this Light, he would have kept his Sentiments ever to himself, since that Man must necessarily be a Villain who endeavours to disturb the Means of universal Happiness, by bringing in Doubt, or confuting any material Point in that System on which that Happiness depends.---From a Knowledge of this, the virtuous philosophic Heathens forbore to undeceive the World as to the Veracity of their Mythology; For doubtless in those Days of general Ignorance, if their moral Precepts had been strip'd of a religious Reverence, they would have been much less regarded; as the Difficulty would have been too great for the Philosophers ever to have persuaded the rest of the World of the Necessity and Beauty of Virtue.

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So

*So if this Age was as much involv'd in Ignorance as theirs, it would be the highest Piece of Injustice to separate Morality from any one System of Religion, however false and absurd Reason might make that System appear: But while the World abounds, as now it does, with so many thousands who are resolv'd to think for themselves, however little capacitated for such a Task; I think it a necessary Piece of Justice just to point the Way the Powers of Reason naturally lead them, lest from a ridiculous Desire of being particular, they run headlong on, and instead of forming one rational Scheme for their own Satisfaction and Happiness, they use all their Art to subvert the Doctrines of Revelation, which can only disturb and perplex others, without bringing the least Advantage to themselves.*

*On the other Hand, I think this Essay may be useful to shew that those who have engag'd to support the Cause of Christianity by Reason, have taken very wrong Steps, as must evidently appear when their own Arguments have reduc'd me to the Necessity of concluding the Soul cannot be immortal. To support such a Cause therefore with rational and philosophical Arguments, is the only way to give its Enemies the Advantage: And if we think the Scripture is the immediate Word of God, what need have we of Reason to make us believe it; but if we think it is not, then Reason must be our best and surest Guide.*

*It is however not at all material, whether the Author of this Essay is directed in his own private*



## INTRODUCTION.

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*vate Sentiments by Scripture or Reason, since all his Arguments are here purely rational; neither doth he intend in the least to depreciate the Cause of Christianity, well knowing that it is impossible that a sincere Christian can be at all stagger'd in his Faith by the strongest Appearances of Reason; because the Christian firmly believes that Reason itself is a blind and insufficient Guide to Truth. And tho' an Argument should appear even to sensible Demonstration, he would nevertheless condemn it as a Piece of Sophistry, and think there was some unseen, unknown Cause that might at once confute it all.*

*Reason therefore cannot effect or endanger the Cause of Christianity, when founded on its only true Basis, the System of Revelation. But from hence appears the Necessity that Men should be altogether Christians or Philosophers, lest by endeavouring to join two such opposite Systems, they offend and entangle themselves in both; and instead of knowing what Virtue is by Revelation, or of seeing the Necessity and Beauty of it by Philosophy, they are hurried from one Opinion to another, and become nothing but Disturbers of the World, Madmen, Fools, and at last, if possible, meer Atheists.*

*It may, perhaps, be thought further, that this Essay may be detrimental to the Cause of Morality, by destroying the Fear of future Punishments, even among those who might be prevailed on to think and judge rationally.*

*It*

*It is evident, that religious Precepts, or the Fear of future Justice, will not restrain Men from Villainy, else why are our necessary and indispensable Laws?---And I should be very sorry to think Mankind were virtuous for no other Cause than a View of a future Reward for their Actions; or to think Men had so mean an Opinion of the wonderful and eternal God, as to imagine he will give them everlasting Happiness for paying him such a servile, mercenary Adoration, which they would not pay but out of Fear of Punishment, or in Hopes of Recompence.*

*It may also be said, that the Expectation of future Bliss, whether just or no, ought not to be taken away, because it serves to comfort the Virtuous under Misfortunes, inflicted on them by the Vitious: But is not a Consciousness of Innocence equal to this? That which Horace stiles the brazen Wall of the Virtuous, Nil confire sibi, nullâ pallefcere culpâ. But certain it is that, however Appearances may deceive us, whether Virtue has a future Reward or no, it is a sufficient Recompence to itself in this World.---However, whether it be thought so or not,---the Man that shuns the common receiv'd Actions of Vice only out of a Dread of Futurity, and not from his natural Goodness of Heart, will find Means to be a Villain, tho' his Passions should to that End be forc'd to varnish over the Crime with the most sacred and religious Colcur. So tho' a Man should see the Necessity and Beauty of Virtue ever so clearly, yet without Goodness of Heart he*  
*would*

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would find Means to convert even his strongest Plea of Virtue, into a Reason for executing his favourite Villainy. And notwithstanding religious Precepts may influence Men to Virtue, equally as well as known philosophical Truths, yet if they have not a sufficient Share of Goodness of Heart implanted in their Nature, they will be Villains in spite of both Religion or Philosophy.----And as that Man is not a Christian or good Man who is only virtuous in Expectation of future Recompence, so that Man is not a Philosopher or a good Man, who doth not find it his Interest and Happiness to pursue Virtue, tho' he believes he never shall have a future Reward for his Actions.

Hence then it appears, that no Man has room to be proud of his Virtue; and that the more abandon'd and vitious any Man is, the more he deserves our Pity.---The Reader may now proceed to the Treatise before him, being only desir'd to think candidly, and to understand well before he either disapproves or commends the Truth of the Argument.

C O N-

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A N  
E S S A Y

To Prove

*From the Arguments of the best Philosophers, that the SOUL of Man is not, neither can it be IMMORTAL.*

---

S E C T. I.

*A Definition of the SOUL, as given by Philosophers, and a Conclusion of its Immortality drawn from it.*

**I**T is necessary before we form one Objection to so general an Opinion, as the *Immortality of the Soul*, that we should consider how far we agree, as to its essential Existence, with those \*, who support this important Doctrine.

*First*

\* As the late Dr. *Watts* was a Man that expressed the united Sentiments of the best Philosophers, in the most intelligent and perspicuous Manner, and was beside as strenuous a Professor of the Soul's *Immortality* as any Man ; I hope I shall not be accused of unfair Dealing,

B for

*First* then---We allow that the Soul is an intellectual Being, not at all subject to the Accidents and Properties of Matter, in general; such as Solidity, Extension, Contraction, Expansion, or any Quality whereby it is render'd local \*, or in a Capacity to take up the least or the most infinite Space.

II. That this intellectual Being is acting on, only, a particular Part of Matter, *i. e. the Body*, by certain inexplicable Means, as utterly unknown to us as the Means how the *Planets* act in their *Orbits*, by wonderful Dependencies on their proper Centers of *Gravitation*; all which we can attribute to nothing but the Will of the *Great Creator*, from whom they have received such necessary Laws as are stiled the *Laws of Nature*.

III. That the *Soul* is nothing but that Power in Man; or rather acting on the Body of Man, that enables him to *perceive*, to *reflect*, and to *will*.

IV. That the *Soul* is a perpetual or constant Power of Thinking, and that upon its

for reasoning upon his Definitions and Arguments, without introducing and reconciling the more abstruse Assertions of those Philosophers from whence he has drawn those Definitions; the Truth of which, their Arguments however varied, concur to maintain.

\* As to that nice Distinction, made by some Philosophers, in saying that Spirit has *Ubiquity* but not *Locality*,---or that it may be *somewhere* and yet be in *no Place*, I esteem it mighty ridiculous, as having no real Meaning at all in it.

ceasing

ceasing to be *active* it must immediately cease to be.

It is from these stated Principles that a *late Philosopher*, who (if we set aside his irrational Attachment to some particular Systems) had of all Mankind the greatest Perspicuity and Justness of Reasoning, draws these two *Corollaries*.

1<sup>st</sup>. " That the *Soul* is in its own Nature  
 " *immortal* ; for nothing but the Power  
 " which hath given it this active Life and  
 " Being can destroy it : It is entirely out of  
 " the Reach of the material World to hurt  
 " it : It cannot lay aside its own Thinking,  
 " it cannot put itself out of Being : Nor can  
 " we conceive how any other Spirit can make  
 " it cease to act, *i. e.* cease to be : Such an  
 " active Being as a Spirit cannot be destroy'd  
 " but by Annihilation ; and surely *God*, whose  
 " Right and Prerogative it is to create or give  
 " Being to a Creature, hath not put it into  
 " the Power of any Creature to annihilate  
 " his Works, or take away their Being."

2<sup>dly</sup>. " That, when the human Body  
 " dies, the *Soul* exists and continues to think  
 " and act in a separate State : And, when it  
 " is freed from all the Avocations of Sensa-  
 " tions of sensible Things, it will live more  
 " entirely in the Reflexion on its own Ope-  
 " rations, and will commence a State of  
 " Happiness or Misery, according to its own  
 " former Conduct ; either rejoicing in the

“ Testimony of a good Conscience, or under  
 “ inward Anguish and bitter Self-Reproaches,  
 “ from the Consciousness of its own Guilt.”

Perhaps this Author, from an earnest Persuasion of the Truth of his Assertions, drew these Conclusions before his Argument had gained sufficient Ground for such weighty Inferences: For, upon summing up the Evidence of his Reasons, we find he is obliged to use his *not being able to conceive how one Spirit can be so prevalent as to annihilate another*, as a Proof of the Impossibility of it.

Hence, we might conclude, that our Author could not conceive how God himself, who is a Spirit, could annihilate the Soul; but if this is not his Meaning, as certainly we must infer it is not, from what he says preceding, *that it is in the Power of no other Being to destroy it*; by which he must imply, that it is in the Power of God to destroy it;—it is needless then to say, *surely God has not impowered* any of his Creatures to annihilate his Works; before we have sufficient Reason to conclude, that the *Creator himself* will not put an End to them. Thus what doth it argue in *Favour* of the Soul's *Immortality*, to say no Creature or Power but God can annihilate the Soul, before we have proved that *God himself* will not destroy it, on the Dissolution of the Body, *i. e.* that he has not created the Soul of such a Nature, that it cannot possibly exist without the necessary



cessary Organs of the Body. Here then is the Point to be disputed on; for, as to the second Corollary, it is nothing more than a pretty rational Consequence of the first; and if the first is prov'd of *no Force*, that of itself must necessarily fall.

But before we proceed immediately to examine the Justness of the above Inferences, let us take a little Notice of the *Universality* of this Opinion of the *Soul's Immortality*, because many have taken this as a presumptive Proof of its Veracity.

## S E C T. II.

*The Universality of the Opinion of the Soul's Immortality consider'd; its Foundation and insufficient Consequence.*

**N**OT only the *Christian* of every Sect, the *Mahometan* and the *Persian* Believers, but the unletter'd *Indians* have, as it were naturally implanted, this Sentiment in their Minds; and the latter, very rationally (tho' so often laugh'd at and exploded a Conceit) believes also, that his Dog shall keep Company with his Master in the Regions of Immortality.

Let us examine then whether this is an innate Idea, explicitly wrought into the Nature of the Soul of Man, and born with us;  
or

or whether it be an Idea formed in the Soul, by its Reflexion on itself, or if it be not an Idea communicated to the Soul, in its Communion or Converse with Souls of the same Nature; which Converse, it is plain our Souls hold together when they acquaint each other with our Thoughts, by the Means of Sensation. Now if we could conclude it of the former Nature, there might seem some plausible Reason for thinking it a *presumptive Proof* of the *Soul's Immortality*, and esteeming it a Sort of an Evidence given us by our Creator: But we cannot conclude it such an innate Idea, because Mr. *Locke* has manifestly disproved the Possibility of there being any such innate Ideas implanted in the Soul; but proves that all Ideas must be formed by Reflection or Reason, *that is*, by the Soul's acting on itself. Now, in this Case, it is absolutely impossible that the Soul should be in a Capacity of forming a just Judgment on so abstruse a Point, at a Time when it is almost incapable of forming any very rational Ideas of Things daily occurring to the Senses: For I imagine no Body can tell how they first imbibed the Notion of the Soul's Immortality: But if there be some who can, they can easily ascertain whether it is an Idea formed in the Mind by Reflection, or whether it is not (as I conclude it is) an Opinion communicated to the Soul with its earliest Notions of Morality: And therefore so deeply impressed in  
the

the Tenderneſs of the Mind, when no Act of Reaſon was powerful enough to withſtand the Impreſſion, or to judge of the Truth of ſuch an Impreſſion; that it requires all the Efforts of Reaſon, afterwards, to eradicate it.

As to Mr. *Watts's* Doctrine of *innate Ideas*—I believe none will contend, that the System of Immortality is ſo conſonant with the Nature, Frame, and Make of the rational Mind, as that *two and two make four*—a Part is *leſs than the Whole*, and other Axioms according to which the rational Mind, of Neceſſity muſt and will judge, and therefore, theſe, ſays *Watts*, may be called innate Ideas.

The philoſophical Antients, it is true, believed, as much as the Moderns, a future Exiſtence of the Soul; of which, *Socrates* was a noble Inſtance: But their Ideas ſeem plainly to have riſen from their abſtracted Notions of *Virtue* and *Vice*, and the Neceſſity, they imagin'd, of future Rewards and Punishments; and tho' this Circumſtance makes ſtrongly for the *Immortality* of the Soul, yet there appears no Proof of ſuch a *Neceſſity*; ſince they themſelves allowed that *Virtue* was its *own Reward*, and *Vice* its *own Punishment*; the one rendering Mankind happy, and the other occaſioning them to be miſerable, even in this World. But this we will conſider preſently.

You

You will say then, Whence arose this Idea at first? Even supposing it to have been communicated from Father to Son ever since the Beginning (if ever there was a Beginning, as in all Probability there was) of Man's Existence---it must then of Necessity be either explicitly implanted in the Soul, or the Effect of the Soul's acting on itself, *i. e.* of Reason or Reflection.

To this I say,---it is probable that a Man, who had never heard of the Soul's being immortal, might nevertheless be of that Opinion: Yet this Belief is occasioned more by the *Will* influencing, or as it were *bribing*, the *Reason* so to conclude, than from the natural Power of judging of Truth, which is essential to the Soul. For, from the Pleasure arising from our own Ideas, it is natural for the Soul to will or desire never to be robb'd of that Pleasure which must cease in its Non-Existence.

But here you will say, perhaps, *the Reason is not subject to the Will, but the Will to Reason.* For you cannot perceive or think what you will.—This is true.—Yet tho' the *Will* is not the Director of Reason, it can, and plainly doth, impose false and specious Propositions on the Judgment in Favour of its own Cause; and the Conclusion form'd by the Judgment, in Consequence of these, is called, *Partiality*: For the Power of Reason



*son*, in itself, will from all Propositions judge impartially.

Here comes the Difficulty of persuading People to what they are unwilling to believe; and the easy Concurrence to the Belief of any thing by People impartial and unbiass'd: And this the Divines are sensible of, when they say, there is more Hopes of converting a Man of no Religion at all, than of a bigotted Heretick.

Now that all, or the greatest Part of Mankind, seem to have the Desire of Immortality, is plain; and we may justly ask, as *Cato* is represented saying,

*Whence is this pleasing Hope, this fond Desire,  
This longing after Immortality?  
Or whence this secret Dread and inward Horror  
Of falling into nought? Why shrinks the Soul  
Back on herself, and startles at Destruction?*

From whence he infers,

*'Tis the Divinity that stirs within us;  
'Tis Heav'n itself that points out an hereafter,  
And intimates Eternity to Man.*

But this Inference is not evident; neither is our Desire of a future Existence any Proof at all of it; unless the Case is fairly stated before those Powers of Reason, whereby we naturally and infallibly judge of Truth; and they join to direct the *Will*, to maintain and support that Doctrine. For it is plain that the

Will, when not acting from this innate Knowledge of Truth, or the innate Cause of Virtue (of which we shall speak hereafter) directs us oftentimes to Things stupid, false, and immoral. Hence it is evident, that the most firm Belief in Man, arising from his own Reflections of a future Existence, is exactly the same with the Belief of a Man in the following Case.

Suppose a Man had a Friend whom he lov'd as himself, and it should be told him, by one whose Word equally might or might not be depended on, that a most *uncommon* Misfortune had happen'd to this Friend.— Now his being *unwilling* that such a Thing *should be*, would immediately awake all the Reasons or Causes he could think of, to encourage him to conclude, that it really *was not*; and if, upon examining all that should occur, he finds no Justice to think the *Probability* or the *Possibility* of *such a Misfortune*, will he not believe his Friend is safe?—Uncoubtedly he will.—But is this Belief a Proof that he is so?—Certainly no; for after all, there may be a Cause, which thro' the Perplexity of his Hopes and Fears, never appear'd in a just Light to his Reason, or perhaps was never suggested, or perhaps a Cause that he did not know existed in Nature, which may have occasioned such a Misfortune, and which Cause, when he comes to be sensible of, he will no longer doubt of  
the

the Truth of such an Effect, and of his Friend's Misfortune.

So tho' a Man, out of a Desire of being immortal, may think he has ever so many Reasons to believe it; yet if afterwards he becomes sensible of a Cause why it cannot be so, that Power of Reason whereby he judges of Truth, will infallibly convince him of it: And the only Cause that makes a Man remain not convinc'd by a *just Argument* is, that he either wants Capacity or Penetration to understand the Justice of its Propositions: For it is plain, if a Man sees and knows *two* and *two* are added together, that he must conclude the Sum is *four*.

But to apply the foregoing Supposition to the Effects of the *Prejudice of Education*. Suppose a Man in those Circumstances was told of a Misfortune befalling his Friend by a thousand Witnesses, whose Veracity in other Respects he had Reason to depend on; or even tho' some of them were the greatest Lyars, yet they being all in the same Story, would he form one Doubt of the Truth of it, even tho' he saw no Reason to believe it? —Certainly no; or if he did, his Belief and his Doubts would be of the same Kind exactly, as that which a Man entertains concerning the Immortality of the Soul, that has been told of it a thousand Times, by a thousand People, and has never impartially examin'd the Probability or Possibility of the

Truth of such a Belief.—Here then is, I think, clearly demonstrated the *Source* of the Opinion concerning the Soul of *Man being immortal*; and it is plain from it, that we may justly assert, that *the Universality of that Belief, is not the least Proof of the Truth of it.*

Now we will consider then, first, the Validity of the Proofs brought by the above-quoted Philosopher of the Doctrine in Dispute, and then examine the Reasons that may be given to think such an Immortality necessary, and then proceed to give other Reasons for thinking there is no such a Necessity, and for our believing the Soul incapable of existing after the Decease of the Body.

### S E C T. III.

*Proofs of the Immortality of the Soul examined.*

FIRST. then, *the Soul is immortal*, says our Philosopher, *because nothing but the Power which hath given it this active Life and Being, can destroy it.*

This Reason, granting it true, has no Weight at all relating to the Assertion, unless it had been before prov'd, that the Author of the Soul's Being *would* not destroy it; which is the most material Point in question: And this is what this Philosopher has omitted to mention, as if the divine *Volition*

or



or *Will* was less necessary or less doubtful in this Case, than that *Power* which is only the Consequence of that *Volition*. But as this Suggestion would have quite disconcerted his Hypothesis, he has summ'd up the Cause without it.

2dly, *It is entirely out of the Reach of the material World to hurt it.*

If our Author here means, *that the Soul (as a Power not at all subject to Matter's Properties, as at first allow'd) cannot be affected by Matter in itself, consider'd as a Substance that has no Power at all*, his Assertion is as ridiculous and as childish, as 'twould be to say, if *any Thing is out of our Reach, we can't reach it*. But if he means, as he certainly does, that the *Soul*, consider'd as a Power and an existent Being in itself, cannot be affected by that Power, which acts upon all Matter in general, in some Degree or other, and is call'd the *Law of Nature*, I must enter a little into the Truth of his Assertion.

If we consider the Soul abstracted from the Body, as having nothing at all to do with *Matter*, we may then say, neither *Matter*, or the Powers acting upon *Matter in general*, can affect it. But if we consider the Soul acting in Conjunction with the Body, it may, and will, be affected by the *Power* acting upon Matter in general, by Means peculiar to that Part of Matter or Body to which it is united ; *that is*, on which it acts : As if

a Stone should fall on my Head, the Power acting on the Stone would, by means of the Organs of Sensation, affect my Soul.

The same in Cases of Diseases, broken Limbs, and the like, the Soul is affected with extreme Pain, which without, the Soul would not be felt; and this Pain must proceed from some Cause to which Matter in general is subjected, as no Man has a Pain peculiar to himself; but it is possible a Man of the same Construction may be liable to it as well as he. It is true, indeed, he becomes sensible of this Power acting upon Matter in general, by the Means of Sensation identically particular to himself; for one Man doth not feel the Pain of another, as each is affected with his own.

Now there are Instances of the rational Faculties being impair'd and render'd useless to the necessary Offices of Life, from the Diseases of the Body: As in Cases of Lunacy; at which Time the *sensitive Faculties*, or the *Powers of Sensation*, which are more immediately acting on the Body, seem much less affected than the *Reason* or the *Soul's Power of acting upon itself*: Since a *Lunatic*, that cannot *remember, reflect or judge*, is often very sensible that he *sees, hears and feels*.

Now if the Soul is so liable to be affected, even in that Part in which it is said its Immortality consists, *viz.* that of *acting upon itself*, by the slighter Accidents of the Body; surely,

surely, when the Body receives the Shock of Death, when the Blood ceases to flow, the Eyes to see, the Ears to hear, and all the whole Body to move, certainly the Soul must be so affected as to *cease altogether to be.*

We see a Man wounded and maim'd, so that he cannot support himself; yet may so recover, as to be as useful and agreeable to himself and others as before:—We see a Lunatic, oftentimes, entirely incapable of reasoning, yet may be so restor'd, as to reflect and judge as nicely and justly as ever.

Again:—A Man may be so wounded, or by Diseases render'd incapable of putting his Limbs to their former Use, but must be forced to support an insufficient Body 'till it drops into the Grave. The Soul of a Lunatic may be so affected, that it shall support the Insufficiency of Reason 'till it---*shall we not say,* 'till it ceases to act at all; consequently *ceases to be.*

For if it is allow'd that those Powers of the Soul, which are called the Powers of *Sensation*, immediately become inactive when the Body dies, according to the second Corollary, *the Soul, in a sepearate State, is freed from all the Avocations of Sensations and sensible Things, &c.* And if it is evident, as I have prov'd it is, that the *Power of the Soul's acting on itself*, is full as *subject* to be affected by Accidents peculiar to Matter, as the *Power*  
of

*of Sensation is*, have we the least *Shadow of Reason* to infer, that the *Powers of Reflection* can exist without the Assistance of the Body, any more than the *Powers of Sensation*? I think not.

But you will say, perhaps, this is no demonstrative Proof. Well, tho' it be not, and we should allow, in favour of this Article, that it is out of the Power of the whole *material World*, or the Power acting upon all *Matter*, to hurt the *Soul*, consider'd separate from the Body; yet we must first know that it can exist in this Separation, before we allow this a Reason for its Immortality. (*In other Words*)—We must know the *Soul's Immortality* from some other Cause, for this is an Argument of no Moment at all.

3dly. *It cannot lay aside its own thinking? it cannot put itself out of Being.*

It is possible for a Man to take a Pistol and shoot out his Brains, by which Action he at once *annihilates* the Powers of Sensation, no inconsiderable Essence of the Soul: But whether the Soul is altogether rendered inactive by Death or no, this Assertion of the Impossibility of the Soul being able to destroy itself, is no Reason to conclude its Immortality; unless you will say, that a Man's being unable to walk, is a Proof he never shall depart from the Spot he is in,  
before



before you have prov'd the Impossibility of his being carried.

4thly, *We cannot conceive how any other spirit can make the Soul cease to act, i. e. cease to be.*

This is the least of a Reason that can possibly be given: For if our not conceiving how any thing *could be*, is a Reason why it *is not* or *cannot be*, we have the same Reason to conclude that the Soul and Body do not act in Conjunction, because we cannot conceive *by what means*; tho' we have daily such evident Demonstrations of the Veracity of such mutual acting.

These then are the great Proofs of our Philosopher, deduc'd from the best and most rational Arguments of his own, and of others, in favour of the Immortality of the Soul.

We will now examine the Reasons that may be given to think such an Immortality necessary.

#### S E C T. IV.

*Reasons to think the Immortality of the Soul necessary.*

1st. **I***T may be thought necessary, to the Honour and Wisdom of our great Creator, that a Soul, possessed of rational Faculties in so high a Degree, and capable of such ex-*  
D
traor-

*traordinary Attainments, should be continued longer in Being, than the short Space of Time allotted for the Life of the Body.*

As to this, we are incapable of forming any true Judgment of those high, noble, and extraordinary Attainments we may imagine the Soul possess'd of: For nothing is high, great, or noble but by Comparison; and as we are so ignorant of the essential Greatness of the *Deity*, we cannot form any just Idea of what Consequence we are of, in respect to its wonderful and incomprehensible Nature.

It is therefore highly probable, that we entertain a much greater Opinion of our Beings, than is strictly consonant to the Nature of Things, and the Extensiveness of *God*.

This Supposition then, argues nothing of a Necessity for the Immortality of the Soul.

2dly. *It may be thought necessary from the seeming Necessity of future Rewards and Punishments.*

This has, for many Ages, been esteem'd, by the Rationalists of almost all Persuasions, as a sufficient Reason to expect, if not an absolute Proof of, a future State: — We will therefore consider it very impartially.

This Principle can have no other solid Foundation than the abstracted Notions of Virtue and Vice; for if our Actions were neither Good or Evil, where is the Necessity of Rewards or Punishments? We must then,  
first,

first, consider what is *Virtue*, and what its opposite, *Vice*.

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## S E C T, V.

*Virtue and Vice, their Foundation and Essence examin'd.*

**T**H E R E has been nothing, in all the Systems of Philosophers, so much contested as this.----*What are Virtue and Vice?*----The Man of Faith will tell me, that it is plainly reveal'd in the *Word of God*, the only true Standard of Wrong and Right.

Now I think it absurd to imagine, that the great Creator permitted Mankind to act for so many hundred Years, as, according to chronological Account, were elaps'd before the Bible was wrote, without a just Standard for their Actions. But be that as it will.---I allow that the System of Morality, to be found in the sacred Writings, abstracted from that Heap of Absurdities wherewith it is inculcated, is a System as truly perfect, just and noble, as is to be met with in any Writings whatever. Yet shall we not think this rather the System of the philosophic Heathens improv'd, than a new one immediately reveal'd to us from our Creator.

What are more noble and just (according to our Notions of Justice) than the Sentiments deliver'd under that allegorical Heap

of Absurdities in the Heathen Theology ; and it is evident, these Sentiments were as capable of influencing moral Practices : For where have we had one Instance of a *Christian* being a *better Man* than *Socrates* ? — Shall we not think then, that these two Systems of Morality spring from the same Source in the rational Mind ? And shall we not cast aside the Heap of Absurdities taught us by *Revelation*, as *Socrates*, *Plato*, and other Philosophers of those Days, did those of the antient *Mythology* ; which, nevertheless, were as much and as *literally* believed by those who were incapable of thinking *then*, as the Scriptures by the Generality of Christians are *now* ?

It is possible the Man of Faith may see no manner of Reason in all this : I shall therefore leave him to the Vanity of his own Imagination, and confine my Discourse to the Man of Reason, who is the only just Disputant.

We will examine then first what *Vice* and *Virtue* appear to be, and then proceed to consider their Cause or Foundation.

As to the former, it will be needless for me to enter into the Subject in my own Words, when it is already so justly express'd, and so clearly demonstrated by the truly ingenious Mr. *Brown*, who, in his *second Essay on the Characteristics*, after having fully prov'd the Imperfection of the Definitions of Virtue,  
laid



laid down by *Clarke, Wollaston*, and Lord *Shaftesbury*, asserts----*That Happiness is the last Criterion or Test, to which the moral Beauty, Truth, or Rectitude of our Affections is to be referred*, which he thus demonstrates by two Circumstances.

1. " Those very Affections and Actions, which in the ordinary Course of Things are approved of as Virtues, do change their Nature and become vicious, in the strictest Sense, when they contradict this fundamental Law of the greatest publick Happiness.

" Thus, altho' in general, it is a Parent's Duty to prefer a Child's Welfare to that of another Person, yet if this natural and just Affection gain such Strength, as to tempt the Parent to violate the *public* for his Child's *particular* Welfare, what was before a Duty, by this becomes immoderate and criminal.

2. " Actions which are, in their own Nature most shocking to every humane Affection, lose at once their moral Deformity, when they become subservient to the general Welfare, and assume both the Name and Nature of Virtue. For what is more contrary to every gentle and kind Affection of the human Breast, than to take away the Life of a Man : Yet, when the Necessity of public Example compels us to make a Sacrifice of this Kind, tho' we may lament the Occasion, we cannot condemn  
" demn

“ demn the Fact: So far are we from brand-  
 “ ing at as Murder that we approve it as  
 “ Justice, and always defend it on this  
 “ great Principle alone, that it was necessa-  
 “ ry for *the public Good*.

“ Hence, therefore, we may obtain a just  
 “ and adequate Definition of *Virtue*, which  
 “ is no other, than *the Conformity of our Af-*  
 “ *fections with the public Good, or the volun-*  
 “ *tary Production of the greatest Happiness.*”  
 Whoever will read this Author’s whole Es-  
 say, will see with what Justness he proceeds  
 to this Definition of Virtue.

We will go on now to consider the Founda-  
 tion or Source of Virtue in the rational Mind.

Dr. *Watts* allows, that the Foundation of  
 moral Virtue is naturally implanted in the  
 Soul of Man; and that this Foundation is  
 the *innate Knowledge of Truth*, which is es-  
 sential to the Soul: For hence it is, says he,  
 that the Soul rationally judges of *Right* and  
*Wrong*, of *Fitness* and *Unfitness*—that *two*  
 and *two* make *four*—that when a Globe is  
 fitted into an exact round Case, there is a  
 Fitness of those Things to each other; and  
 then proceeds to say, that thus the Soul ra-  
 tionally concludes, *Contracts are rather to be*  
*kept than broken*. Now, supposing that by  
 the same Rule that, *two and two make four*,  
 we should see that *Contracts are rather to be*  
*kept than broken*; yet if the *Desire* of pro-  
 moting Happiness, as has been proved, is  
*Virtue* and Happiness the *Effect* of it; we  
 should,

should, in this Case, often find that keeping some Sort of Contracts, rashly and inconsiderately made, would render miserable all the Parties engaged in it, and be not at all instrumental to the *public Good*: And therefore *breaking* such a Contract would be a Means of Happiness, and as every Means to *mutual Happiness* is *Virtue*, even *acting* according to *Truth* would then be *Vice*.

We see then here is an evident Proof of the Falsity of Dr. *Watts* adjudging the Foundation of *Virtue* to the *innate Knowledge of Truth*, as well as of Mr. *Wollaston's* Definition of *Virtue*; who affirms, that “no Act  
“ whether Word or Deed of any Being, to  
“ whom moral Good and Evil are imputable,  
“ that interferes with any true Proposition,  
“ or *denies* any Thing *to be as it is*, can be  
“ right. That, on the Contrary, every Act  
“ is right, which does not contradict Truth;  
“ but treats every Thing as being what it is.”

But I refer the Reader to Mr. *Brown*, to see a beautiful and fair Confutation of that Definition; and conclude that, however essential the Knowledge of Truth is to the Soul, it is that Faculty of the Soul which *Watts* calls *pathetic Instinct* and *Disposition toward Goodness*, and what I term *Goodness of Heart*, and not the *Knowledge of Truth* that is the *Cause* of moral *Virtue*: And of this, as *Watts* observes, there are some few Instances in most Persons, which appear chiefly

chiefly in the working of Benevolence and Compassion in us towards *sensible Creatures*, *inward Aversions* to Cruelty, and perhaps, says he, a natural Reverence to that Almighty Power, whom we call God, when we come to know him.

Neither is it any ways more accountable how more or less of this Disposition is implanted in each Individual of Mankind, than it is by what Means one Man has more or less the Capacity of Reasoning, Genius, or elevated Ideas than another.

Now if from this Source arises moral Virtue, every Man will be naturally more or less virtuous, as he has more or less *Goodness of Heart* naturally implanted in him: And tho' some Men, who may perhaps have but little of this innate Principle, may do Actions tending to the Happiness of their Fellow-Creatures, either from the Influence of moral Precepts, imagining thereby to acquire the Favour of their Creator, or out of Fear of what they are told are the Consequences of Vice; and tho' others, entirely disregarding every Sentiment of this Kind, and deaf to whatever little they have of this natural Goodness, go on to the greatest Lengths in Actions that render the World miserable; yet this does not at all hinder us from rationally fixing here the Foundation of Virtue.

And



And if acting from this innate Principle of Goodness or Desire of promoting universal Happiness be Virtue, acting from the immediate Want of it must necessarily be Vice.

Now, where is the Justice or Necessity that Men should be punished or rewarded, for acting from Principles which they neither gave themselves, nor can possibly divest themselves of ?

For if the Soul can divest itself of this Instinct or Faculty, why cannot it divest itself of all its other Faculties, and so annihilate itself ?—Dr. *Watts* allows that the Soul cannot think otherwise than that *two and two make four* — *a part is less than the Whole*, and such like.—Now is this innate Idea, *the Knowledge of Truth*, of more Consequence, or less easy for the Soul to divest itself of, than that great Spring from which our Happiness evidently derives ? I think it should not be thought so — for it appears that this Knowledge of Truth doth not immediately occasion us to do Good or Ill, but acts subservient to our Desire of promoting Happiness, by forming Propositions of the Fitness and Unfitness of Things ; whereby the Soul becomes sensible when to exert that Instinct, it is possessed of, in favour of Virtue. So that we see this innate Knowledge of Truth is a *secondary* and not the *primary* Cause of moral Virtue, only assisting the natural Disposition to Goodness in its Offices.

E

But

But here it may be objected----*That the Soul may be divested of this Faculty or Disposition, for there are many Men, who have been possessed of a great Share of it; who, by becoming familiar to inhuman Sights and Deeds of Cruelty, have lost a great deal of this Disposition: As is evident, in Surgeons, Butchers, and the like. So that those, who at first might be almost ready to swoon at the Amputation of a Limb, or at the Death of a Sheep, shall, after some Time, think no more of the Cruelty of their Profession than those whose Concerns are with inanimate Things.*

Now, however plausible this Objection may seem, it is nevertheless false; for they have not a jot less of this natural Disposition in them, than before they ever practised those Professions: And it is only that innate *Knowledge of Truth*, whereby they judge of the Fitness and Unfitness of Things, that is *vitiated* or *milled* by a Practice, the Necessity of which imposes specious Propositions on the Mind, from which their Reason concludes, that this Instinct or innate Goodness of Heart need not be exerted on such Occasions; and thus from being accustomed to the Sights and Actions of Cruelty, without feeling an uneasy Sensation; the Distresses and Sufferings of Humanity do not awake this natural Disposition in them as they did before.

And yet, suppose you tell a compassionate Man, that is a Surgeon, of the Distresses of

a poor Creature who is starving in Prison; this will affect him fifty Times more than your telling him of a Man that is expiring with both his Thighs broke: While the Keeper of a Prison, perhaps, would be less affected to see the Condition of a Man expiring beneath all the complicated Miseries of Want and Confinement, than at the Sight of a fractured Skull or a broken Arm.

But the Reason why we find, among those People who are daily familiar to Scenes of Misery, so little Appearances of this Instinct to Goodness, is perhaps from their being *naturally more void of it* than others, which may be supposed one great Reason, why they should chuse or endure to be of such Professions.

In the same Manner, many People run into Vice, by becoming familiar to Actions which at first a seeming Necessity for imposes upon the Reason to conclude in some Measure justifiable. As a Man, that is starving, might possibly prevail on his Reason to conclude, that his Condition alleviates the Crime of his robbing on the Highway, and he may silence his natural Disposition to Pity or Goodness of Heart, from the specious Supposition that the Loosers may not be in a Condition to want, and therefore Misery may not be the Consequence of such an Action; and thus he goes on, from one Step

to another, till this natural Instinct is not apprehensive when to exert itself.

It was from a Knowledge of the Truth of this, that Mr. *Pope* says,

*Vice is a Monster of so frightful Mein,  
That to be hated needs but to be seen,  
But seen too oft, familiar with her Face,  
We first endure, then pity, then embrace.*

Thus it is, that a Man, who naturally has a great Share of this Goodness of Heart, may be brought, from one Action to another, to commit the most horrid of all Vices, Murder. But how often do we see that, however powerful have been the Motives that have induced them to such an Action, yet this Instinct, awaking in them, has so strongly resisted and made such a terrible Conflict in the Soul, that some have stood, without being able to exert an Act of Volition, to move their Hands to commit the Fact.—Others have begun, and have been unable to perform the Murder effectually : And very few but that the Moment the Fact has been perpetrated, have had no manner of Thought of the Motives that led them to it, but have been struck with inexpressible Horror, which has been the Effect of that Goodness of Heart implanted in the Soul.

And it is plain, that the Desire of gratifying our Appetites and Inclinations, which imposes itself on the Reason as a rational Necessity,



cessity, is the Cause why the Powers of judging of moral Fitness and Unfitness draw false Conclusions ; from which the Will influences the Body to commit Acts of Vice : For a Man that has naturally a greater Share of *Anger* and *Pride* than a *Love of Gain*, will sooner kill or offend another out of *Resentment*, than out of a Prospect of *Interest* ; while the Man whose Soul is more strongly influenced by *Avarice*, an Inclination naturally implanted in the Soul, than by any *other Passion*, will sooner kill or offend a Man, out of a Prospect of *Gain* than out of *Resentment*.

Thus it is evident, that the Passions, to which the Soul acting in Conjunction with the Body is subject, do, by imposing on the Reason, make it direct the Will to influence us to Actions of Vice : For, as has been before observed, the Will is a Power directed by the Reason, as it appears in the most abandoned Cases.

For when do we see a Man attempt to stab, or cut the Throat of another, with a *Straw*? Never—unless he be a Madman or an Idiot ; and then we think there is no Justice in punishing him for his Actions.—It is plain then, by the rational Means taken to perpetrate Scenes of Villainy, that Reason is in Action at that Time. Whence is it then that any Vice is acted, unless the Power of judging of moral Fitness or Unfitness is not vitiated and abus'd? and this Power, it is plain,

plain, is more or less influenced according to that Goodness of Heart found in some Degree, perhaps, in every Man.

But if there be a Man, who, without Hesitation, from no Cause either of Resentment or Interest, can go and stab another and feel no Remorse at what he has done; that Man is either a Madman or an Idiot, entirely incapable of Reason at all, or else he is a Man that has not, nor ever had, any Goodness of Heart in his Nature.

Hence it appears, that tho' natural Instinct or Disposition to Goodness is the Source of moral Virtue, yet it is directed to virtuous Actions by the Reason; and that it may be influenced to remain seemingly inactive by those Conclusions which Reason naturally draws from specious and deluding Propositions, offer'd to it by the Will or the Desire of gratifying our Inclinations: So that either the Want of this natural Instinct, or the vitiated Power of Reason, which Men have in Proportion to their Knowledge, may occasion Men to fall into Vice. And it is plain, that a Man that has a greater Share of this Instinct join'd to his Reason, or a greater Share of Reason join'd to this Instinct, will support the same Misfortunes much longer, without endeavouring to relieve himself by Actions of Vice, than that Man who has less of both.

And it is plain, that Men, who deservedly bear the Character of the strictest Virtue, might,

might, in the same Situation, have been no more able, either by *Goodness of Heart or Reason*, to resist the *Desire of gratifying their Passions*; than those that have been remarkable for the most glaring Actions of Vice.--- For there is no Man can be certain what he should or should not have done, if under Circumstances which he never experienced.

And now it is plain also, that Men cannot give or take away from the Soul the Powers of *Reason or Instinct*: and it is as entirely owing to the Cause of the universal Power or the *Law of Nature*, that one Man is *inbenevolent*, as that another is *dull*.

And as I hold it entirely commendable, that the Law should punish or execute a Man who shews he either wants *Justness of Reason or Goodness of Heart* to direct his Actions; so I hold it as just, that an *Idiot* or a *Madman* should equally be punished or executed, as they are found to want these also.---So that while there remains the least Reason to hope a Madman may recover his Reason, to influence his Goodness of Heart, whereby he may be of Service to Community, I would have him only confin'd to Measures necessary to restore him. So I would, for the Safety of Mankind, have all Men, who are found to want *either of these*, whether from the greater Want of *Reason*, as in *Idiots*, or the greater Want of *Goodness of Heart*, as in *Villains*, of which some are greater Fools and others greater

greater Knaves, only confined to Measures necessary to restore them, if possible to be of Service to Mankind : But, if they are found to be, from more flagrant and repeated Actions of Vice, incapable of such a Restauration ; I would have them *legally* \* put to Death, and commend it as a virtuous Action necessary to the public Good, whether they be *Madmen, Fools, or Villains*.

But tho' here appears Justice in this Action ; it is because *Vice* and *Virtue* are Actions that affect only Mankind ; but it would be stupid to imagine the original Cause of all Things, or God would *eternally punish* the Souls of Men, for not acting otherwise than they were influenced to do, from Powers which he is the Cause of : and it is just as stupid, to think it Injustice in the Creator, to leave unrewarded a Man, for doing what the Frame, Make and Nature of his Soul obliges him to do.

There appears then no Necessity for future Rewards and Punishments, from the abstracted Notions of Virtue and Vice.

\* I say *legally*, for there is no Man that can be supposed to do Justice for himself ; since those Injuries that appear to a Man, when committed against his own Person, appear wonderfully heinous to the same Injuries committed against others.—It behoves therefore, that all Vices should be inspected and punished by those, who are entirely disinterested. Hence it will follow, that no *Villain* ought to be a *Magistrate*, as he is interested in the Cause of Vice ; and that no *one Man* should have that arbitrary Power, of doing either himself or others Justice.

S E C T.



## S E C T. VI.

*Certain Reasons for the Necessity of future Rewards and Punishments examined.*

**T**Here may appear, perhaps, a Necessity of future Rewards and Punishments, from the Sickness, Anguish, and Persecution of the Virtuous in their Life time; while many of the Wicked seem to be entirely free from these Inconveniencies.

As to this, it is impossible for us to trace how much Trouble or Misery one single vitious Action of our Lives may, by a thousand unseen and unaccountable Accidents, inflict on the World: So if Misery is the Consequence of Vice, as has been proved, it is impossible to tell what Man occasions most Misery; since one single Act of Vice, committed on some particular Occasions by one Man, may occasion a thousand Times more Misery in the World, than the same Act a thousand Times repeated by another, and in other Circumstances.

Now in the strictest Notions of Justice, no Man should bear more Misery than he has been the Occasion of to others; but should bear his Share in proportion to that: For if a Man is only to bear so much Misery at he intends to inflict by a vitious Act, perhaps he did not intend to be the Occasion

sion of a thousandth Part of that which may happen by that Act ;---who then must suffer for occasioning that Misery ?---- Perhaps you will say, that Man who intended so much Unhappiness by doing an Act, by which it may so happen from the Nature of Things, none at all shall be effected.

But I believe Experience sufficiently convinces us, that very few, if any, of Mankind intend the Misery which is the Consequence of Vice: But that, if that Consequence appear'd to them in a just Light, perhaps the worst of Men would tremble with Horror at the Thought of committing such an Act.---- Yet tho' we suppose that Men should, in strict Justice be answerable for all the Misery their Actions may be the Occasion of, each must be answerable as an Individual ; for one Man cannot be supposed to support the Miseries of a thousand People put together, tho' one single Act of his may offend so many.---He must therefore pay in Proportion to himself as a single Being, what he owes to Mankind: And if so, who knows how much of this Debt the Pains and Difficulties, daily attendant on the human Body and Mind, do hourly discharge? Or who can tell how much committed Misery is atton'd for, by a terrifying Dream, or a raging Fit of the Gout or the Tooth-Ach? Add to this, the *Pleasure* and *Pain* always in some degree

degree concomitant to the Actions of *Vice* and *Virtue*.

Hence, then, why may we not infer that the supreme Being doth actually dispense Justice to all the human Race, tho' by Means inexplicable to us, in this World ; and that the Ballance of Happiness and Misery, is adjusted at the Death of every Man.

But you may call this abstruse or perhaps idle Reasoning. Yet we may, by looking round to the sensible Creatures about us, and by making some just Comparisons, acquire a better Idea of ourselves, and the Insufficiency of this Reason to expect a future State of Rewards and Punishments.

In whatsoever Degree we are pleas'd to consider ourselves above the Brute Creation, no body will deny, but that the great Creator acts with impartial Justice towards every one, even the most minute and insignificant of his Creatures. Why is it then a *Horse*, a *Dog*, or *Cat*, shall be nourish'd and fed with all the Necessaries of Life, while others of their Species shall be subject to continual hard Labour, to whipping, or being worried to Death.

Can we suppose this or that Horse, Dog or Cat, has deserv'd more or less from the Hands of its Creator than another? If not, certainly there must be, according to our Notions of Justice with respect to ourselves, a State in which the Sufferers shall be re-

compenced for the Pains and Fatigues of Life.

But this seems to argue the Immortality of Brutes, *which we shall not now consider*, or that, by Means utterly unknown to us, the Creator dispenses Justice to these Creatures in their Life time ; and if to them, why is it not probable that, by some such like Means, he may act with us.

This, however, shews how imperfect are our Notions of what we call *Divine Justice* ; and how little from them is our Reason to expect a future State of Rewards and Punishments, when we cannot tell, whether we have Justice done us in this World or no.

Having now consider'd the Proofs of the Philosophers in favour of the Soul's Immortality, and the Reasons that might induce us to think such an Immortality necessary ; and as we find, in their pretended Proofs, no evident Demonstration of any such Doctrine ; and as from the seeming Reasons of its Necessity we can draw no rational Conclusions to expect it, we will now proceed to examine the Reasons that induce us to think the *Soul cannot be immortal*.

To this End, we will consider our relation to sensible Creatures, whose Souls are esteem'd by Philosophers at best, but Souls of another and an inferior Nature, and which they don't scruple to pronounce have no Title to Immortality.

S E C T.



## S E C T. VII.

*Our Relation to the Brute-Creation consider'd,*

**I**T is the Inference of similar and equal Causes, from similar and equal Effects, that leads us to the most just and rational Knowledge; and which, as *Watts* observes, constitutes a great Part of the Science of Mankind.

Who doubts, nay, is it not commonly laid down as the most evident of all *Truths*, that *we shall all die*?---But whence do we draw this Truth?--Why, from Reason,--from this Manner of Comparison: We daily see that Creatures of similar Form, Organs and Faculties to ourselves, are subject to Death; and meet with none whose length of Years are so far beyond the common Account of our Lives, as to give us the least Room to think them exempt from it; because we find their growing up, their Maturity and Decay, exactly resemble those that went before them.----We see also this same Decay and Death happen to every Animal in the Brute-Creation; and tho' we should meet with a Creature of so extraordinary a Kind as to have lived for two or three Centuries, and to have been transmitted from Father to Son, we should admire it as an Animal of excessive long Life, but should not in the least doubt

doubt but that it would die some Time or other; tho' we never saw or heard of any such a one's dying in our Lives.

Now this Accident, as well as many others, Mankind have in common with the Brutes. ---We cannot live without Sustenance any more than they;---are as liable in our Nature to Hurts, Pains and Diseases as they are: And if it should be prov'd we are possess'd of the same Kind of a Soul, however superior, (tho' it may perhaps be shewn in some Cases to be essentially equal) is it not as indisputable a Truth that our Souls must cease to exist like theirs, or if we suppose ourselves immortal, that their Immortality must be similar to ours.

I hope no one will, too rashly, think this Manner of reasoning a Disparagement to the Dignity of human Nature, before he has well consider'd the Dignity and Wisdom of an *Horse*, a *Fox*, and an *Elephant*.

Let us then now examine how nearly we are allied to the Animal Creation;---and first, as to the Body.

Philosophers agree, that all *Matter* is essentially the same, and differs only in its Modification; but that the different Modification of Matter, gives it no superior or inferior Degree of Merit, in itself consider'd.---For whether the Clay be converted into the most pompous and superb Figure, with respect to us, it is exactly the same Clay, consider'd

sider'd in it as that which is converted  
to the meanest and vilest Uses.

But should we bring the most plausible  
Reasons, from Experience or Philosophy,  
to prove the Bodies either of Men or Brutes  
superior, we must give the Cause entirely  
against ourselves. Experience tells us, that  
the human Body, divested of the Soul, is to  
us more nauseous and detestable, than that of  
most Brutes: And if, from Philosophy, we  
should agree that Beasts have no Thought or  
Liberty at all, but are only Pieces of finely  
organiz'd Matter, capable of many subtile  
Motions communicated to them by outward  
Objects, we, by this, yield them the Superi-  
ority; since we own the Matter of our Bo-  
dies is not capable of such Sensation, but that  
our Sensation is the Faculty of the Soul. We  
find also, that by a successive Revolution of  
Particles of Matter, that same Matter which  
is at one Time Grass, becomes part of a Beast,  
and from thence to be part of a Man, by  
Means of the Sustainance of Life.

Neither doth the Form of Man give him  
any Pre-eminence in the Order of Beings, as  
it is no more serviceable to him in the Offices  
of his Life, than are the Forms of the Brutes  
to them; and tho' we distinguish a Man  
from a Brute rather by his outward Form  
than by the Dignity of his Soul, of which  
we cannot so immediately judge, yet it is  
possible there are, nay, there have been, many  
Instances

Instances of Creatures more resembling in their Form the *Human* than the *Brute* Species; such as the *Chimpanzee*, and which for want of understanding Speech and Talking, have yet been esteem'd Brutes.

On the other Hand, I never heard any body presume to say, that a *wild Boy*, I remember to have seen, was not of the *Human* Species, tho' he could not speak, nor understand Speech any otherwise than a Dog might do, and was beside all over hairy like a Dog or a Monkey; tho' his Features were almost as regular as I ever saw those of a Man.

It is plain then, from such Instances as these, that it is possible, by an intermixing of Species, that there are Creatures in the World whose Form and Intellects are so join'd, that no body can pretend to determine justly whether they are Men or Brutes.

Now if this be, as certainly it is, the Case, there is no other true Distinction in the Order of Beings, than by that Power which is their Life;---that which directs them to seek Happiness or shun Misery, *to wit*, the Soul.

We will now then consider what is the Soul of a Brute, and how far it resembles the Soul of Man.

## S E C T.



## S E C T. VIII.

*The Souls of Brutes, what Philosophers agree they are.*

**I**F Mr. *Locke's* Supposition be true, \* *that Spirit may be only a Property of Matter; and that it is possible for the Creator to join such an Influence to Matter, as to make it capable of all we see it act,* the same System is as justly applicable to the *Man* as the *Brute*: And that *Man* has a Soul consider'd not as a Property of Matter, but as a Being in itself, was at first agreed on.---We must conclude then, that the acting Principle in the *Brute*, is of the same Kind with that of *Man*; and if of the same Kind, what possible Degree of Inferiority, suppose the lowest, can affect any Being so much as to make it mortal, while another Being, acting in the same Manner, is immortal.

Take the most ignorant and stupid of all the human Species, and compare his intellectual Faculty or Soul to that of a *Locke*, a *Newton*, or a *Boyle*;—what a wonderful Difference! how weak, how insignificant, how mean are the Ideas on one Side! how strong,

\* If Spirit be only a Property of Matter; it must of necessity cease to be when that Matter has evidently no particular Property at all. But if we esteem the Soul mortal, it matters not at all whether we judge it a Property of Matter, or a Being in itself.

how copious, and how elevated on the other ! and yet we don't scruple in the least to allow the *one* a Soul as *immortal* as the *other*.

Is it because they resemble each other in their outward Form that we do this ; if so, how excessively, how poorly, ridiculous do we judge of the Order of Beings !

Now since from such an Inferiority in the Faculties of the Soul, we draw no Inference of the want of Immortality, we shall certainly find, by comparing the actuating Power of some Brutes with that of some Men, that there being not so much Difference between Brutes and Men as there is between Men and Men, that we have no Ground to suppose one more immortal than the other.

But to confirm the Justice of such a Manner of reasoning, we will quote a Passage from the learned Bishop *Burnet*, wherein he advances more than could, from him, be expected in favour of the Brute Creation.

This Writer, after supposing that human Nature can hardly receive or bear the Notion of Beasts having no Sensation or Thought at all about them, because there are such evident Indications of even high Degrees of Reason among the Beasts, he therefore concludes, “ That it is more reasonable to imagine there may be Spirits, of a *lower Order*, in Brutes, that have in them a Capacity of thinking and chusing, but that ’tis so entirely under the Impressions of  
“ Matter,

“ Matter, that they are not capable of that  
 “ Largeness either of Thought or Liberty,  
 “ that is necessary to make them capable of  
 “ Good or Evil, of Rewards or Punishments;  
 “ but that, *therefore*, they may be perpetu-  
 “ ally rolling about from one Body to ano-  
 “ ther” ; *that is*, by Transmigration.

Dr. *Watts*, having quoted this Passage, states the Case on both Sides the Question ; and for want of one single Argument to proceed further (without injuring that System, to the Promotion of which, however absurdly, he wanted to reduce all his philosophical Arguments) very fairly gives it up, and says he can make nothing at all of it. And yet, after this Confession, he goes on to tell you, no Conclusions can be drawn from the Nature of Beasts, let the Case be decided how it will, that can affect the Nature, Reason, or Religion of Mankind.

This, however, you are to take upon the Credit of his Word only, and are to believe the Immortality of the Soul, from the Necessity of future Rewards and Punishments, which, he says, *it is the Glory and Interest of the supreme Ruler of the Universe to appoint*. For tho’ he so frankly owns, he knows so little of the *essential Dignity* of a *Brute*, yet he does not at all scruple to decide what is the *Glory and interest of a God*, whose essential Perfections, it is impossible,

after all our Searches, to know any thing at all about.

As to the Bishop's Conclusion, that the Soul of a Brute must be more subject to Matter than that of a Man, it is merely a Conjecture, the Force of which will appear when we come to consider the Actions of Brutes in Comparison with those of Men.

Yet to infer, that (supposing it prov'd) *because they are incapable of Rewards and Punishments*, they must be transmigrated from one Body to another, is excessively stupid; for the Distribution of Rewards and Punishments, seems more applicable to this System than any other.

As that Soul that suffer'd excessive Toil and Drudgery in one Beast, and was in itself of a harmless Nature, might, by Transmigration, be converted into another Body, the Business of whose Life might be nothing but Ease and Pleasure; so, on the contrary, the Soul that in one Life and Form had tasted all the Sweets and Enjoyments in its Kind, and was an offensive Animal, might have a suitable Retaliation in some other Body.

Thus we see, that those Philosophers who most strenuously insist on the Immortality of the Soul of Man, are necessitated to conclude, that Brutes have Souls capable of Sensation and Reflection: And we find, that upon granting this, when they endeavour to distinguish it from the Soul of Man in so important



portant a Point as its *Immortality*, what egregious Blunders they fall into.

This *Watts* saw ; and rather than make any Blunder that might prejudice his Cause from a Conclusion in this Point, very judiciously, doth not decide any thing at all about it ; tho' in avoiding this, he unluckily falls into that Mistake I have above expos'd.

We will now come to compare the Degrees of Understanding in Men and Brutes.

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## S E C T. IX.

*The Powers of Understanding in Men and Brutes compared.*

**W**E have consider'd the Soul of Man as essentially consisting in the Faculties of *Sensation*, *Reflection*, and, what is directed by these, the *Will*.

First, then, as to *Perception* or *Sensation*.

We have a thousand Instances wherein the nice Distinctions of *Sensation* are more readily communicated to the Soul of the Brute than the Man.

Of this there needs no other Example than that wonderful Power in the Dog, whereby he shall trace, by the subtle Effluvias of Smell, not only an Animal, but a human Creature :—We daily see this, and are surpriz'd at that extraordinary Instinct which  
we

we find ourselves so void of; that a Man, with all the Faculties of his Soul engaged, shall not be able to tell which Path, among twenty, his Friend hath taken; while we see his Dog, without any other Advantage from external Objects, in themselves consider'd, shall pursue the right Track after him.

Thus, in every Article of Sensation, there remains not the least Doubt but that, among some or other of the Brute Creation, they are found to have *Perception equal*, and, in many Cases, *superior to Man*.

Now then, we must consider in what Degree they have *Reflection* or *Reason*; and under this Head, we will just speak of the *Will*. It is plain that the Power of Volition is, in some Cases, influenc'd by *Sensation*;---as, when the Senses are acting, we cannot chuse but see, hear, feel, &c. Now in other Cases, it is plainly influenc'd by the Powers of Sensation, acting with those of Reason:---As supposing a Man should see a prodigious *Weight* falling towards his Head, the Apprehension occasion'd by the Sensation at that Time, which makes the Will direct the Body to get out of Danger, is partly the Effect of *Reason*: For if a Man was to see a Feather falling down, he would perhaps entirely disregard it, tho' he may be as sensible of the Descent of the *Feather* as of the *Weight*.

And

And this Power of *Volition*, Brutes have in common with Men ; for by this, their Bodies move and act, equally wise for their own Use and Safety as we do.

Now *Reflection* or *Reason* is a Faculty so necessary to the Soul's *essential Existence*, that, without it, we should not be capable of acting for our Preservation.----This we find also in a great Degree essential to the Souls of Brutes; for it is plain that Animals remember Persons and Things, Acts of Kindness and Diskindness, of which we have daily ten thousand Instances.

Some Animals stand in Dread of what has offended them ; others again remember to resent the Offence receiv'd.---A Horse stands in fear of a Whip and the Smack of it, because he remembers the Smart he felt at the Time he saw the same Object, or heard the same Sound.----A *Horse* naturally starts at the Sound of a Drum, because it occasions a Sensation he is a Stranger to, and therefore he doth not know the Consequence of it ; but after hearing it several Times repeated, and feeling no Hurt arise from it, he takes no more Notice of that than of any other familiar Sound.

So a *Man* is *equally* startled at an *unusual Noise*, but when he finds no hurtful Consequence arise from it, the Repetition of the same Accident will less and less affect him,  
till

till it comes at last to have no other Effect than that of confirming him when there is such a Noise.

A Man is also afraid of a Thrust from a Sword, because either he has felt the Smart it can occasion, or from Information or Reflection on the Effects of a similar Cause, he justly imagines it can hurt him: So if you could inform a Horse that had never felt the Whip, that it would hurt like something he had felt, he would stand in the same Fear.

Neither doth the Difficulty of informing the Horse this, argue any thing of his want of Reflection or Reason: For if you were to shew a Man, whose Language you were a Stranger to, an Instrument, the Effects of which he had never seen, or the Effects of any thing similar to it, you would find perhaps as much Difficulty in communicating the Knowledge of its Effects to him by Information, as the Effect of a Whip to a Horse.

For supposing the Horse entirely ignorant of the Whip, the Sound attending it, and the Action accompanying the Blow, yet if you take another Horse and lash him with it, the Animal that stands by will be immediately apprehensive of something from it; but not because he hears the Sound, or sees the Blow, but by the Agitation and Concern in which he sees and hears his fellow Creature at that Time, and of this he is naturally a Judge.

Now



Now to this *Apprehension* are join'd the Circumstances of the Blow, the Whip, and the Sound, which are inseparable Ideas; and therefore when he hears or sees the one, he is immediately apprehensive of the other. So, in the former Case, you must shew the Man its Effects upon something whose Nature and Properties he is acquainted with, and then he can be justly apprehensive of the true Effect of such an Instrument.

Hence it is evident, that the Soul of a Brute has, besides all the Properties of Sensation, the Powers of Volition, and that of retaining simple Ideas equal to Man, and of acting as rationally from those Ideas.---But we will consider this further.

The Rule Mr. *Pope* lays down is evident,

*We cannot reason but from what we know.*

A Man cannot form any Ideas of Things whose Nature he is entirely ignorant of, and of any thing similar thereto, (for the most abstracted and metaphysical Idea, must have its Foundation from the Knowledge of physical and natural Causes.)

A Man who never had the Sense of *hearing*, cannot reason of *Sound*, or of any thing similar to it; if of *seeing* he can form no Idea relative to *Form* or *Colours*.

*Reason* then is the Power of drawing Inferences from Ideas acquir'd by Sensation, which Inferences are Ideas form'd purely by

the Soul's Reflection, or Power of comparing Effects and Properties within itself, tho' the Cause of those Effects, and the Things possess'd of those Properties, may perhaps be ten thousand Miles withdrawn from any of the Organs of Sensation.

In what Degree then are some Men possess'd of this Power of Reason?—We find here, that while we have had Men whose profound Capacities have been able to comprehend and retain almost every Kind of Knowledge, we have had others who have been capable of entering but into one or two Branches of Science; and others again entirely incapacitated to comprehend or retain any thing at all of Science. Thus we see some Men so deeply enter into mathematical Learning and the Science of Algebra, while others can't imagine in the least what they are about, who talk of *some Quantities less than nothing, and of others not quite so much less than nothing.*

And yet those who can't comprehend this, perhaps may very well understand that *two and two make four, and that three times three make nine*; because these are Ideas, the Truth of which may, by the Organs of Sensation, be demonstrated: And whenever the Mind doth judge, it can judge no otherwise; and yet there are some Men so dull and void of the Power of thinking, that they cannot comprehend *by what Means or how this*  
 Axiom

Axiom is true, without such a sensitive Demonstration.

I shall not pretend to assert that a Beast, of any kind, is capable of this Knowledge; otherwise than that a Horse must feel that the Weight or Power of one is less than that of two, of two less than three, &c.---This appears by his Act of Volition, in putting out an additional Strength to resist in proportion to such an added Force.---Neither is it any ways material to the Purposes of that Beast, or doth it argue against the essential Power of Reason in the Brute, that this Truth does not come to him in the Form of a Proposition, since he is as sensible of the Justice of the Axiom, as a Man who is convinc'd by his Senses, that the same Thing or Accident is so many Times repeated, and cannot judge of it without the Evidence of his Senses, or the Remembrance of that Evidence.

Now, tho' such an Evidence is the Test of the most sublime Reasoning, yet the Man of Science, taking such certain Axioms for granted, goes on, thro' a thousand complex, similar, and dissimilar Ideas, without ever having occasion to examine the sensitive Truth of any one of those Ideas.

Now such a Manner of Reasoning, I will not pretend the Brutes to be possess'd of;---and yet at the same Time Experience tells us, that such a Manner of Reasoning is as little inherent to some of the human Species,

Either then we must deny the Souls of these Men to be of the same Nature with those of a superior Capacity of receiving Knowledge, or by admitting that the Souls of Brutes are *essentially* the same with Men of an inferior Capacity, we must allow that they are of the same Nature with those of the most elevated Genius.

But perhaps it is not sufficiently evident that the Souls of Men of narrow and weak Understandings, are as incapable of Reason as the *Brutes*, we will then compare their Intellects more particularly.

There can be no Instance of the want of Reason in Man or Brute, but what must effect them either in *Speculation* or *Practice*.

First then as to *Practice*, we can have no Cause to imagine the Brute wants Reason as to its Actions, if it provides as wisely for itself in its own Nature, as Man doth for himself in his; neither is the Effect of rational Propositions of any Moment in this Case: For we don't say that Man wants Reason, who avoids or chuses any thing that is agreeable or detrimental to his Nature, from his Knowledge of its Properties immediately by Sensation, any more than another who avoids or chuses the same Thing, because, from a long Train of Examinations into the Nature of Beings, their Effects, Modes and Properties, he is sensible *why* such a Thing is agreeable or detrimental to his Nature.

The



The Philosopher will not run his Head against a Wall, because he is sensible of *the Motion and Properties of Matter*, and the Construction of his own Organs, Fibres, &c. by which Knowledge he is sensible he shall feel Pain by such an Action.

A Man that is no Philosopher, will not run his Head against a Wall, because, tho' he knows nothing at all concerning the Properties of Matter, or the Construction of himself, yet he knows, by the Means of Sensation, and the rational Conclusions he of necessity draws from those Sensations, that such an Action will hurt him.

Now for some Reason or other, a *Horse* will not run his Head against a Wall, any sooner than a *Man* or a *Philosopher*.

Again, we see with Wonder the great Improvement Men have made toward the mutual Benefit and Advantage of each other by the Arts of *Navigation, Commerce, &c.* Yet these Improvements, we are sensible, must be made by Men of the most refin'd or extensive Talents, and not by Men of mean or narrow Capacities.

We see, on the Side of Brutes, the wonderful Means they have taken, and daily take, for the mutual Interest and Preservation of their Species, equal, perhaps, in their Nature and Knowledge of Things, to ours.

We have Instances of many Men that, notwithstanding all the Advantages of Information,

mation, by Means receiv'd from Creatures of their own Kind, yet cannot retain the Method whereby they should know how to spell a *Word* or a *Name* : And yet we have seen a Dog in this Metropolis, that would never miss to spell the Names of *Julius Caesar* and others, by only hearing the Sounds of them :----And in some Dogs, of polite Education, we have found them also capacitated to the modish Qualifications of dancing a *Minuet*, which some Men perform much more clumsily with the same Advantage.—I have also a Dog now by me, who, upon hearing the Name of a Gentleman, who has offended him, only mention'd, will immediately begin barking, tho' the Party should be a hundred Miles distant. We see some *Parrots* and *Magpies* take off or imitate our Speech articulately.—Is it then because we do not find in the same Animal the Power of Speech join'd with the Understanding, in the same Manner as it is in us, that we conclude its Understanding is not essentially like ours : ----Thus we may object against the *Parrot* for *talking* what he does not *understand*,----against the Dog for not *speaking* what it *understands* ;----and may not the Parrot or Magpye laugh at you for not imitating its natural Chatter, or knowing what it means, and perhaps it does, and only takes off human Voice out of Derision ? And may not the Dog esteem us a Parcel of ignorant, stupid Beings, that

that cannot trace the Footsteps of each other, as sagaciously as he can those of his Master, a Hare or a Fox?

But in Opposition to what I would here infer, Mr. Pope says,

*The Lamb thy Riot dooms to bleed to Day,  
Had he thy Reason would he skip and play?*

Mr. Pope here puts the Lamb in the Place of a Man, which is not the Case; we are to suppose the Lamb endow'd with a human Soul:---Yet, as a Lamb, it is year'd, brought up in the Fields and Pastures, knows nothing at all, or very little, of the Actions of Man; does not know a *Butcher's Knife* from a *Piece of Wax in that Form*; it sees its Shepherd, indeed, drive it or gently lead it from one Place to another, provide Fodder or a Fold for it at Night; this is all it knows of Mankind.—What Ground has it then to be apprehensive of Danger, whether it is inclos'd in a Butcher's or a Shepherd's Pen? Since, supposing it to have a human Soul, it *cannot reason but from what it knows*: And it is very certain the Lamb, with its own Soul, is under terrible Apprehensions when it hears the Complaint of its Fellow Creatures, with whom it never fails to sympathize, or when he is tied by the Heels for the Slaughter; this appears evident from its struggling to get free, and if it was once loose,  
it

it would make its Escape with all possible Speed.

Mr. *Pope* then should have said,---*Had he thy KNOWLEDGE, would he skip and play?* For the Want of more extensive Knowledge, in any Creature wanting the Opportunity of acquiring more Knowledge, does not in the least argue its Want of the Power of Reasoning from the Knowledge it has. And it is also plain to me, that if a Lamb knew as much of a *Butcher* as it does of a *Dog*, it would stand in fear of one as much as it does of the other; and would no sooner permit itself to be drove into a *Butcher's Shop*, than it would into a *River*, where it might be *drown'd*, or into a *Ditch* where it might be *smothered*.

It is plain then, that a Lamb, tho' perhaps as stupid a Creature as most of the Brute Species, acts *rationaly* from what it *knows*; and as wisely, to answer the Ends of its Creation, as a Man.

You may perhaps say, it is *Instinct* in the one, and the Effects of a *rational Mind* in the other:---but I will not quarrel with you about *Words*;---you may call it *Instinct*, *Soul*, *Mind*, or what you please;---but you must first prove an essential Difference in two Beings, before I will allow them to be of a different Kind.---Mr. *Pope* was very unwilling to go so far as to think the Soul of the Brute of the same



same Nature with that of Man, and therefore after speaking of the wonderful Instinct of Brutes, he says,

*'Twixt that and Reason what a nice Barrier?  
For ever separate, yet for ever near:  
Remembrance and Reflection how ally'd,  
What thin Partitions Sense from Thought  
divide?*

This Hair-breadth Difference, this Cobweb Partition doth not at all exist, but in the Vanity of Imagination; neither doth our Author give us any other Proof of its *Being* than a bare Assertion that it *is*: But Reason feels no such Thing:----*Reason* cannot help telling us, that when two Things are exactly alike, they must be of the same Nature:---Would it not be stupid to say, that any thing exactly round, may not be or that it is not a Circle; when all the Idea we have of a Circle is, that it is exactly round?----I believe you will say, yes:---certainly then, if the Soul of a Brute is possess'd of the same essential Faculties as the Soul of a Man, it must, positively must, be esteem'd of the same Nature.

But let us examine into the Powers of Reason in the Brute Creation, relating to Speculation.

There are some Points of Speculation so immediately applicable to Practice, that perhaps they should have been before consider'd. These are those which are the Foundations

of *Art*, such are the Theories of *Arithmetic*, *Geometry* and *Government* ; from which arise the *Arts* of *Architecture*, *Commerce* and *Law*.  
 ----Let us turn to the Brutes, and see the *Effects* of those *Sciences* among them.---The *Spider's Web*, the *Bird's Nest*, the *Laws of the Bees*, and the *Oeconomy of the Pismire*, are wonderful Instances :---Then why should not we infer the *same Effect must proceed from the same Cause* ?---Or will you say this seems to be rather *Instinct* than *Reason*, because the Beast, Bird, and Insect vary little in these Acts from the rest of the same Kind ; whereas some Men build one Kind of Houses, some another ; some have one Method of Commerce, some another ; some one Kind of Laws, some another. Yet shall not we as rationally account for this by saying, that Man, having more Pride and Curiosity, is more whimsical and wavering in his Actions than the Brutes, who study no more than is necessary to the Use of Nature ; and therefore they are \*uniform in their Actions : For it is certain the *Use* of a House is not its *Form*, *Advantage* is the Design of *Commerce*, and *Happiness* the Design of *Laws*, however their *Form* or *Method* may vary.----Is it then from the idle Vanity of Curiosity that we

\* It is not, however, clearly evident, that all the Brutes are uniform in such Actions with those of their Species, since if we were as sensible of their Mechanism as of our own, I make no Doubt but we should discover many ingenious and considerable Variations.

adjudge the Actions of Men to proceed from *Reason*; and from the Want of *that only*, that we allow the Actions of Brutes to be directed by bare Instinct.— I think this is stupid enough, since we allow that *Instinct* performs the Purposes of the Animal to the full as well, and in some Cases much better, than *Reason* performs ours.

But to come to pure Speculation.

Is the Brute capable of laying down Propositions, and of forming Conclusions from them, relating to Things perhaps unnecessary for them to know. Of this we may ever remain ignorant, unless the Brutes could invent a Way to communicate to us their Ideas; but here we are as ignorant, with respect to our Fellow-Creatures as to the Brutes. For if I meet a Man, or keep him Company for twelve Months, and in all that Time he neither speaks, writes, or by any Means communicates his Thoughts to me, I'm entirely ignorant whether he be a Man of Science, or the most illiterate of his Species. However, if we may guess from *Physiognomy*, as we do among Men, I think it quite easy to imagine, when a Dog, Cat, or any other Animal is buried in *deep Contemplation*, and when a *Jack-Daw*, *Magpye* or *Ape*, is chattering, I esteem them *coxcombly Brutes*, that cannot think :---And whenever I look at an *Owl*, I cannot help suspecting but that, from its little Concern shewn to external Objects,

it is *logically* weighing some very nice Point of *Metaphysics*.

But here it is possible I may be deceiv'd ; ---yet if I am, it is nothing more than we are daily in the Appearances of Men,---when we imagine a *grave Look* and a *solemn Behaviour*, denote *Wisdom* and *Experience*, and that a Man that *chatters* is a Coxcomb, which is not always the Case.

Having now brought all the Reasons that at present occur, and which I think sufficient to place Mankind in a true Light, with respect to their Fellow Creatures, *for so now I will presume to call the Brutes*, we must draw this Conclusion, that Men of Science are of the highest Order of Animals, and that next them, all Creatures, without Distinction, must take their Places, not according to the Form of their Bodies, but according to the native Greatness of their Souls ; by which Order it will doubtless be found, that some Part of Mankind will stand not only equal to but below some of the Brute Creation.

Now then to apply the Design of our Arguments :---If we allow *Immortality* to the *Soul* of the *Philosopher*, and every Soul of the *like Kind*, we must allow it to the meanest of all Animals ; whereby a Mouse, a Rat, a Louse and a Flea, will have immortal Souls, -- *an intolerable Conclusion !* or else we must allow *Immortality* to the *higher Order only*, and so fix a certain Degree at which it must  
stop ;



stop; and if we fix *that* so low as to take in all and every Soul of an *equal Degree* to the Souls of the meanest of Mankind, it is plain we must include *some* of the *Brutes* in our System;---or by admitting *none* of the *Brutes*, we must shut out *some Part* of *Mankind* with them.—We will therefore proceed now to consider the Possibility as well as the Probability of the Souls, both of Brutes and Men, being *mortal* or *ceasing to exist*, as *Beings in themselves*, after the *Death of the Body*.

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## S E C T. II.

*The Possibility and Probability of the Soul's being Mortal, with a Definition of God.*

**I**T was at first allow'd, that the Soul is not a material Being, but only a Spirit or Power acting upon Matter by Means entirely unknown; that it is also capable of *acting on itself*, as by *Reflection*; and that upon its ceasing to *act*, it must immediately cease to *be*.

Now all Power must be essentially the same, however its Manner of acting may vary; as we must allow that that Power which causes the Planets to move in their Orbits, is exactly of the same Nature as that which induces a Stone thrown upwards, to fall down again towards its proper Centre:---

Exactly

Exactly the same that enables a *Horse* to draw, a *Man* to walk, &c. As that may be a Piece of Steel, exactly of the same Nature, and capable of the same Impressions, that lies in a rude Form, and is acting in a very *simple Manner* ; as that which is most surprizingly and ingeniously active in a Clock or Watch : So 'tis that Power, called the *Law of Nature*, that moves the *Planets*, the same that acts upon a *Stone*, upon a *Brute*, and upon a *Man* : For tho' a *Man* be consider'd ever so much of a *free Agent*, and may chuse and refuse his Actions, yet he can't go beyond such certain Laws ; ---he can't walk in the Air, nor move a Limb contrary, nor without an Act of Volition in his Mind, any more than a Watch can cease to go, or can go wrong, when all its Parts are *justly constructed* and *put* together. So that Power, whereby we move Bodies from one Place to another, is still the same Power of Nature, notwithstanding their Motion be *upwards*, directly *contrary* to the *known Laws of Gravitation* ; because the Motion of the Arm, whereby such Bodies are impell'd, is the Effect of the same Power in a greater Degree ; and it is as natural for a Stone to *rise* in the Air, when thrown up, as it is for it to *fall* again of its *own accord*.

Now suppose a *Man* throwing a Ball upwards, it is plain he occasions a Power to act upon the Ball ; for when it is out of his Hand,

Hand, he doth not assist its Motion any more, yet the Ball proceeds: The Power therefore acts upon it; but *how*, or by *what Means*, we can tell no *otherwise* than by saying, it is the *Law* or *Power of Nature*. Now it is the same *Law of Nature* that acts upon that Matter, which *particularly constructed* is call'd *Man*.—But to our Supposition. We see that the *Law of Gravitation*, which acts without Distinction upon all Bodies (whether endow'd with a human Soul or not) lessens by degrees the Power acting on the Ball till it goes no further; the Power then ceases to act; consequently ceases to be.

And it is in vain to deny that this *Power* is a *Soul*, because we can't imagine it to be a *cogitative* or *thinking Power*, which means no more than a Power which can *act* on *itself* as well as on *Matter*. Neither can we imagine this Power to be *communicated from*, or to be a *Part of* the *human Soul*; because the same Power may be occasion'd by Things call'd *insensible*. Thus it is possible for even Man himself to be in such Circumstances, that by the Force occasion'd by inanimate Things, he may be thrown up an excessive Height into the Air by *Earthquake*, *Gunpowder*, and the like. Now this *Power* or *Soul* that forces him up, is superior in Strength to the Force of all the Faculties of his Soul  
acting

acting together : For neither his exerting the strongest Act of *Volition* or of *Reason*, can possibly prevent his submitting to the *Effect*, if he resist the *Cause*.

It is plain also, that however nearly Matter may be instrumental in such an Accident, yet as the Soul doth not *exist* till it *acts*, and is nothing but *Action*, so there is no Soul acting on the *Gunpowder* or *Sulphur*, till there be such a particular uniting of Particles of Matter ; at which Juncture the Soul immediately *exists*, *acts*, and no sooner *ceases to act* than in *ceases to be*.

The *Soul* of *Man* doth not *act*, *i. e.* exist, till there be form'd such a particular Union of Matter, fram'd into Organs of Sense, Fibres, &c. fit for the Soul to act on ; just then the Soul begins to *exist*, and exists acting, till by some \* Accident or other those Particles of Matter are *broken*, *impair'd*, or *dis-united*; and then the Soul ceases to act. Now it is equally evident, that if a Child is be-

\* I would have none here conclude by the Word *Accident*, that I think there is any such Thing as *Chance*, or that any Thing *may* or *may not* be ; since however dark and intricate it may seem to us, there is an absolute Necessity, in the Order of Nature, for Things to happen as they do : And as Mr. *Pope* says,

*Whatever is, is right.*

gotten



gotten and naturally form'd in the Womb with every Organ, Fibre, &c. perfect; it can no more fail of being agitated by a *human Soul*, than a regular constructed Clock can forbear moving, or the Gunpowder forbear giving a Concussion, when touch'd by a Sparkle of Fire—and in each of these Cases, the Parallel is just—for when the Clock is maim'd, or render'd imperfect, its Power ceases, and as soon as ever the volatile and combustible Parts of the Gunpowder are dispers'd, the *Soul ceases to exist, there is no more Power left.* And thus it is with that *free Agent, Man.*

Now, from the above Instances, we see the Possibility of Souls being created and destroy'd, as to their Existence as separate Beings, with Ease. For we can't imagine that those Powers, which acted on the Ball, on the Gunpowder, or on the Clock, to exist after the Dispersion or maiming of the Union of their proper Matter, acting on themselves, as the Soul of Man is supposed to do. If this were the Case, almost every Action of our Lives would create a *new Soul*; and we should have the Universe strangely stock'd with active Beings. We must conclude then that those *Powers or Souls* are *annihilated*\*,

K

or

\* Here then it is evident, that the greater Power will always annihilate the less, let the Properties of that Power or the Manner of its acting be what they will—whether weak or strong, violent or progressive, animate or inanimate.

or if there be any Idea of their existing afterwards, they must be lost and mixed with the Power of the Universe, the Law of Nature.

Hence then, it is evident, that those Powers which act upon Men, on Brutes, and upon inanimate Things, are nothing more than *the Law of Nature* which is the Consequence or the Effect of the *divine Volition* or *Will*: And that these Powers as still Effects of the same Cause, whether they act rationally and on themselves as in Men and Brutes, or by Necessity and purely on Matter, as in Things inanimate: And certainly, *if they are Effects of the same Cause, the Effects must be all of the same Nature.* And here then will appear the Probability of the Soul's Mortality or Cessation of Being; by considering the Affinity of these Powers or Souls. We see the Soul of a Man, at first very weak; not at all capable, or but very faintly, of exerting its rational Faculties: By degrees it grows stronger and stronger, and acquires extensive Knowledge; till at length, in Old-age, notwithstanding all its Acquirements, it grows excessively weak and childish again.—It is true we see, in violent Powers, such as throwing a Ball, nothing but the gradual Decay; but in progressive Powers, such as in those of Plants, Trees, &c. Things always deem'd inanimate, we see exactly such a Beginning, Progress and Decay.—If then we judge justly,  
(and

(and that is certainly the only right Way of judging) from *similar Causes* and *Effects*, is not here a Probability, nay, do not our Arguments, all put together, give us a demonstrative Proof that the Soul cannot exist, as a Being in itself, when the Body becomes inactive;—in other Words, that it cannot be immortal.

Now from hence to form the most just Definition of a Deity, we must conclude that God is in himself, nothing but *Volition* \* or a *Will*, and that that *Power* which has been called the *Soul* or *Law of Nature*, and which Mr. Pope calls *God*, is nothing more than the *Effect* of the divine *Will* or the *Deity himself*; that it is not the *Being*, but only a *Consequence* of the *Being* of God. So that whatever God *wills*, is by that Will, actually done: Because *Volition* being a *Spirit*, and a *Spirit* or *Soul* being nothing but *Action*,

\* Sir Isaac Newton will have God to be extended, and to be a *Substance*, for, says he, *Power without Substance cannot subsist*. Now, God, considered as *Will*, must be a *Spirit*, and as a *Spirit*, must be *Power*, and as *Power* may be *Substance*; but, it is evident that God is not *that Substance* which is the *Power of Nature* of which our Souls are, identically part; but he is that Will or Power which is the Cause of that Power, of Nature.—Now while we are so ignorant of what Kind of Substance that Power or Spirit is (material Substance it is allowed by all it cannot be) of which our Souls are Part, who can pretend to define what Kind of a Substance, God is?—I think therefore, it is a little idle to pretend to say that *God is Substance* at all; when we don't know what we mean by it.

God's Willing and Acting is exactly the same Thing. And thus he is the *prime Cause* of all Things : And this is all we can understand, as to the *essential Being of a God*.—For, to say the Deity is *Power*, or the Deity is *Space*, allows, from what I have proved, that we and every thing in Nature are identically Part of the Divine Being; since we take up some *Space*, and are possessed of some *Power*—but it is plain neither *Space* or *Power* are, in themselves, infinite Things; however they may surpass our Comprehension: For we cannot allow *Space* to extend any further than God pleases; and we see evidently that *Power* cannot exert itself a Jot further than the Will of its Creator assigns it.—Hence it is plain that *Power* is a *Being* capable of Restraint, and entirely acted on by the *Deity*; and is infinite no otherwise than, as consider'd capable of executing the most *infinite* and *unbounded* Commands of the *Deity*; and *Space* is *infinite* no otherwise than that *wherever Power* is, it there finds *Space*—But suppose we give up *Space* as a *Being*, and say it is nothing—then we shall say, how extensive soever is *Power*, it meets with no Obstruction or Want of *Space* to act in.

But here now may arise an Objection against this Definition of God, from our having proved the Mortality of the Soul.—For you may say, that the Power of Volition or the Will found in Man, must be similar to the

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Nature of the Deity, and may have Immortality annexed to it.--In Answer to this I say,

It is evident that *Will* considered as *God*, and the *Will* in *Man* have no essential Connection; for the Volition of God, or, *God himself*, is the sole Cause of all Power, and the *Will* in *Man* is only, as it were, a Property of the same Power in a very narrow Degree: For the *Will* acts subservient to every other Faculty of the Soul. I cannot perceive what I will—I cannot think what I will, nor *how* I will—I cannot think *two* and *two* make *five*, tho' I would ever so fain; neither can I think any thing *doth not stand* before me, which I see and know actually *doth stand* there; tho' I exert the strongest Act of Volition I am capable of. So, in forming Propositions—I cannot draw what Conclusion I *will*, from supposed Concessions or known Facts, but must draw that which the Power of Reason tells me necessarily follows. Thus not one Act of the Soul is subject to the Will of Man. And we see that Brutes and Idiots have often a greater Share of Will than the wisest and best Philosopher.—The Matter of the Body indeed is subject to *Will*, and that is all—and that, but in some Cases; for if a Man's Leg is broke, he may *will* long enough before it will move. Shall we then give up the Powers of Reason to *Annihilation*, and scruple to give up the Will, the most sensual and beastly Faculty of

of the Soul, acting so much beneath its other Faculties, that it seems rather to be a *Property annexed to the Soul* than any thing *essential to it*.—I am sure you will say, No; if we give up the other Powers, the *Will* must necessarily follow; for where there is neither *Perception* or *Reflection*, there can be no *Will*.

Thus we see that the Will of God or the *Deity*, is the sole Cause of the most extensive Power; and the Will of Man but, at best, the meanest Faculty of a very small and limited Portion of that Power. Where is then the Similarity? Here is neither the Cause of the same Effect, nor the Effect of the same Cause.—It is plain then, they are not essentially in any degree the same. And as this is our only Way of judging rightly, here evidently appears the Reason why we cannot judge of the Essence of God; *because we cannot reason but from what we know*. Now all we know is, that all Power is the Effect of the Being of God. Hence we have God as the Cause, and Power the Effect: But do we know the Cause of any other Effect similar to Power; if we did, we might then judge of God, and say he was like that Cause. We may say, indeed, God is *all-wise, all Justice, all Goodness*, and the like.—But what are those Things we call *Wisdom, Justice, and Goodness*—Why, they are Ideas, which are the Effects of a small Part of that most extensive

*tensive* Power, which is the *Effect* of God. Shall we then *patch* up a God, with the Effects of *part* of a Cause, which *whole* Cause is the *Effect* of himself? Is this doing Honour to God? No – Let us say then, that God is *the Cause of all Things*, and there put an end to our Enquiries; for we have not Ground to step one Foot further.

This, Reader, is the Effect of my first rational Enquiry into the Nature and Dependency of my own Being. The Tendency of inculcating and publishing this Doctrine, it is impossible I should foresee: But I cannot think it will at all hurt the Morality of those who understand it; but will rather lead them to admire and adore the *Infinity* of that God, in whom our Ideas and Reasonings are lost; as well as excite them to that general Humanity, that should be extended to every living Creature, to make them *encourage* those which are *instrumental*, and to *destroy* those which are *prejudicial* to the *greatest general Good*, in whatever Order of Beings they may exist. Hence will follow the Idea of Virtue, and the Justice will appear evident, in *killing a mad Dog*, in the lawful Execution of a villainous Man, or in destroying every offensive Animal. But after all, I am so *willing* to believe, even to *desire* the *Immortality* of the Soul (that is, a Capacity of retaining those Ideas I am possessed of in this World) that I  
heartily

heartily and sincerely wish to see these Reasons I have here given, confuted and prov'd erroneous, and promise the World, that if ever I should be of a contrary Opinion, I will undoubtedly give them my Reasons for renouncing what I have here written.

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